

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

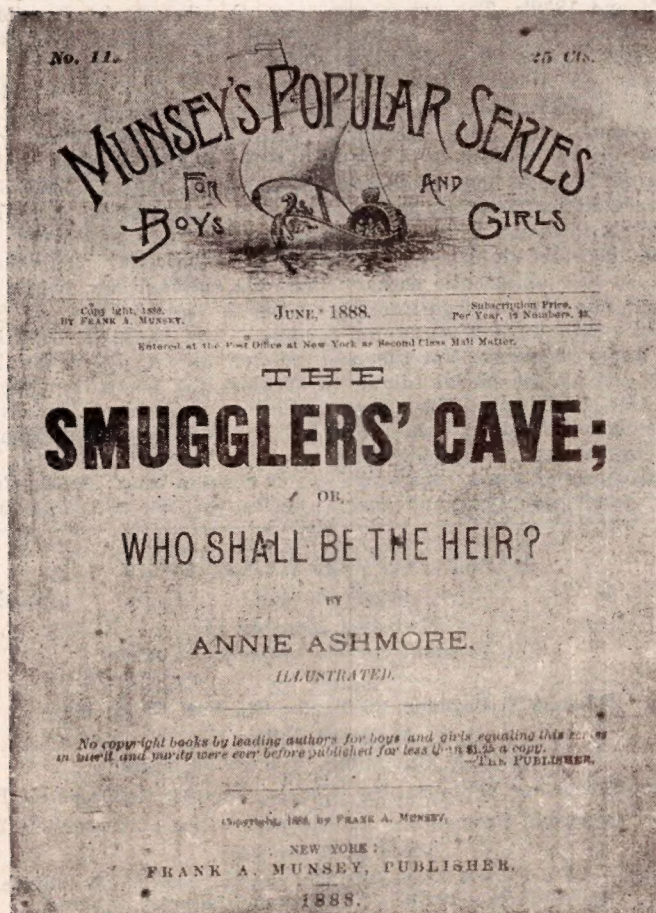
Vol. 22, No. 4

April 15, 1954

Whole No. 259

THE HORATIO ALGER PAPERBACK FIRST EDITIONS

By Frank Gruber



From the LeBlanc Collection

THE HORATIO ALGER PAPERBACK FIRST EDITIONS

By Frank Gruber

A friend of mine has a set of Tip Top Weeklies, numbering some 850-odd titles, which he collected assiduously over a period of three or four years. He began collecting these some time after I started collecting Horatio Alger, Jr., first editions and he completed his set several years ago. I am still trying to complete my own set of Alger first editions, which numbers only 117 titles.

The Alger collector has fairly smooth sailing, when he first starts out. He is able to get nice cloth-bound copies of Alger books published in the 1860's and 1870's. The prices are not too high. Things get a little tougher after he has 30 or 35 titles; still he can go along, although he has to pay a little more. Getting a copy of Alger's first book, *Bertha's Christmas Vision*, published in 1856 is not too difficult. A copy of *Ragged Dick* is more difficult to find, possibly because of its inclusion in the Grolier list of the 100 most significant books published in the nineteenth century.

And then, one day, you run into the Alger books that were actually published in paper-wrappers. Not the reprints put out by the Medal Library, the New Medal Library, The Alger Series, or those issued by Street and Smith. They're easy—millions and millions of copies of Alger books were issued in paper wrappers and there

are probably still a million extant.

The Alger first editions published by Burt, by Munsey and by the U. S. Book Company, ah, those are the tough ones! I was collecting Alger first editions for six years before I even heard of the Alger paperback firsts! It was another year or two before I finally saw one—and I'll admit it was disconcerting, for I had to discard a number of cloth-bound editions put out by Burt, Lovell and the U. S. Book Company, that I had assumed were the first editions.

In August, 1887, the Frank A. Munsey Co. began issuing **MUNSEY'S POPULAR SERIES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS**. It was published in paper wrappers, rather small page size and sold for 25 cents, a stiff price for that day. The stories had run as serials in *Golden Argosy* and were by the leading juvenile authors of the day. A month later, A. L. Burt came out with the first issue of **BOY'S HOME LIBRARY**. Apparently, Burt at this period, had some connection with the great house of Street and Smith, for the books they issued had all run as serials in the *New York Weekly*, the magazine that had been the inspiration for Elverson's successful *Golden Days* and Munsey's own *Golden Argosy*.

I suspect that Munsey's Popular Series, was not as successful as Mun-

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sey had hoped, in spite of his prodigious use of sample copies to stimulate sales, but he persevered and continued to issue the books for about two years, when he quietly dropped the series. Burt's series was issued in a somewhat larger format and appeared to be a better quarter's worth and lasted a little longer, but it, too, died in 1890.

In 1890 the U. S. Book Company was formed. Its aim was frankly to corner the entire American book market. The company bought out a number of smaller publishers and issued books in vast quantities, in every possible field of literature. One of its first efforts was a monthly series of paper-backs, called *Leather Clad Tales*, the most expensively produced of the various paper-back series. Its covers, although of paper, were made to look like leather. Yet, the books had no greater success than Munsey's series, or Burt's . . . although the untimely demise of the parent company, a strictly promotion business, may have hastened the end of the *Leather Clad Tales*.

While these three paper-back series lasted, however, each issued several Horatio Alger titles, under Alger's own name and the pseudonym he used on many Golden Argosy serials, Arthur Lee Putnam. These were the first book appearance of these

stories and are therefore first editions—with the exceptions of several in the *Leather Clad* series, which had previously been issued by Munsey in his own series. Apparently Munsey had some connection with the U. S. Book Company, for many of their titles had originally been published by him. Or, perhaps Munsey was willing to make a dollar wherever he could, by selling titles on which he owned the copyrights, to whatever publisher was willing to pay the tariff. Two books he copyrighted, *Luke Bennett's Hideout* and *Gilbert the Trapper*, by Capt. C. B. Ashley appeared in Burt's series, in Munsey's series and again in the *Leather Clad Tales*. "Capt. C. B. Ashley" was the author of but two books, although under the author's best-known pseudonym, Harry Castlemon, the author was one of the "big four" of the period, Alger, Oliver Optic and Edward S. Ellis being the other three names of the Big Four.

From my own experience in acquiring the Alger first editions that appeared in Burt's Boys' Home Library, Munsey's Popular Series and the *Leather Clad Tales*, I would value these paper-backs with the scarcest of all Alger first editions.

Does anybody in the house have a copy of *The Erie Train Boy* in the *Leather Clad Tales*?

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 202 Harvey Seefeldt, 203 Homcrest Ave., Brooklyn 29, N. Y. (New memb.)
203 Levi Morgan, 7605 Morningside Drive, N. W., Washington 12, D. C.
204 Irving Warshaw, Anchor Book Shop, 114 Fourth Ave., New York 3, N. Y. (New Member)

I WANT TO BUY THE FOLLOWING PROGRAMS IN GOOD CONDITION

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Combined with Pawnee Bill's Great Far East. Season of 1909. Front cover has medallion of Cody and Lillie surrounded by Indians and Elephants.

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Combined with Pawnee Bill's Great Far East. Season of 1910. Front cover has picture of white-haired Cody on Horseback, hat in hand.

Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Real Wild West. Almost any season except the 1916 Chicago engagement in which the regular Wild West program is replaced by a rodeo.

J. Edward Leithead

5109 Cedar Avenue

Philadelphia 43, Pa.

ODDS AND ENDS FROM BOB SMELTZER

Any inveterate reader will, from time to time, come across references to our "old favorites", but mostly references to "Horatio Alger", from "Rags to Riches" fame.

Reading through a paper-covered "POCKET BOOK", as they call 'em; title: "Six Gun Doctor", Page 85; reference to "Beadle's Dime Novels" No. 75, "The Hunter's Escape". He said to his helper "Was right in the middle of it when someone came into the office, and I must have misplaced it. I got to reading those Beadle's in the war days. Clean reading. Nothing like that aphrodisiac 'Ben Hur' that's got all the women swooning nowadays."

MORE ABOUT "MY QUEEN"

by Ralph P. Smith

Charles Duprez' interesting account of the only girl's novel, My Queen, in the June Roundup quotes Harold Holmes' article in an early Happy Hours Magazine, to the effect that No. 29 was not the last number, but that #30 has that honor, in which issue Marion Marlowe became a bride.

Well, the "last number" was dated April 20, 1901, and at the end of the story it announces that next week will bring an enlarged My Queen. No. 30 finished off Marion Marlowe, all right, but true to their promise, Street and Smith did issue No. 31 on April 27, 1901. It was exactly twice as large in page size, three columns, 16 pages, not counting the covers. The story was "A Fatal Love" by Bertha M. Clay, which filled the book except for Questions and Answers by Grace Shirley and a few advertisements. No. 32 is advertised for the following week, to contain "Where Love Leads," by Bertha M. Clay. I have My Queen from #1 to 31 inclusive, but have not seen any No. 32.

is an account of a bicycle trip taken by Mr. Ambruster in 1889 from St. Louis, Mo., to Denver, Colo., and should make interesting reading.

34 years ago—a long time, indeed. Mystery Magazine, dated April 15, 1919; listed titles of some mystery stories written by dime-novel writers of the past, i.e.:

Zitania of Maison Rouge, F. W.

Doughty

Under the Hypnotic Spell, Harry Enton

The Cards of Fate, William Goode
After a Million, Police Captain Howard

The Trevor Puzzle, T. C. Harbaugh.

—Bob Smeltzer

(Advertisements)

EXCHANGES COLUMN

Wanted—Nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 29, 49, 50, 51, 56 and 65 of Do and Dare. George Sahr, 7025 31st St., Kenosha, Wis.

Wanted—N. Y. Ledger, Vol. 1 to 11 and 41 to end. Runs only. Payment in dollars. Write air mail to A. W. Lawson, 13 Charles Square, Hoxton, London N 1, England.

Wanted—St. Nicholas Magazine for July, 1880. Has story on fireworks. Ralph F. Cummings, Fisherville, Mass.

Wanted—The Belle of Boston, by Justin Jones, published by Gleason, 1847. Mrs. S. T. Hoyt, 1970 Ualakaa St., Honolulu 14, T. H.

Wanted—Beadles Half Dime #3 4 5 16 19 22 38 71 83 87 208 218 272 365 372 384 457 572 957 1035. J. J. Myler, 333 Pelham Road, Rochester 10, N. Y.

Wanted—Secret Service #552. The Bradys and the Skeleton Hand. William M. Claggett, 1636 Pearl Street, Jacksonville, Fla.

FOR SALE

Frank Merriwell paper backs.

Street & Smith editions

(thick copies)

John Hildebrand

12 Roosevelt Court

Brooklyn 32, N. Y.

The next issue of the Roundup will contain an article by J. H. Ambruster entitled "Early Bicycling Days." This

NEWSY NEWS

by Ralph F. Cummings

Joseph J. Myler has a lot of old timers for sale, write for lists, all in fine condition, such as Brave & Bold, Old Sleuth, Old Cap Collier, Young Rover, Tip Tops, Nick Carters, Wide Awakes, Beadles Dime and Half Dimes, etc.

Bob Smeltzer lost his old grandpappy pussy-cat, Sniggelfritz. Was run over by a machine, a hit and run driver at that. Poor Bob is feeling pretty blue, cheer him up pals.

According to an article in the Los Angeles Mirror, Feb. 12th, Deadwood Dick turns out to be a colored man. The history written of the old west has almost forgotten the role played by the negro cowboys. Dr. P. C. Durham, English instructor at U. C. L. A. said that among the most famous of these cowboys was Nat Love, known in the cattle country as "Deadwood Dick", a fearless gunfighter, said Dr. Dunham. Love, an ex-slave, was acquainted with Buffalo Bill, Billy the Kid and Bat Masterson. Dr. Durham blamed the fiction writers for ignoring the negro cowboy. They did not fit into the romantic concept of the West and once the western story stereotype was formed, it became impossible to change, said the instructor. A large number of negro cowboys were on the Western plains, particularly in Texas, immediately following the Civil War, Dr. Durham reported. Unfortunately, the Doctor said, these cowboys were forced into other occupations, and even Love, by 1890, was employed as a porter. (This clipping was sent in by J. Grantham).

Thomas W. Figley wants "Harkaway, the Third", printed in an English story paper, also Harkaway serials in Happy Days, and "Jack Harkaway's Son", in a Chicago newspaper around 1906. Who has these for sale?

Howard Fahrer writes: Ralph, I regret that I cannot give you the exact date of the article dealing with Lu Senarens that appeared in the AMERICAN magazine. It was quite a story—a very comprehensive autobiography by Elizabeth Alden entitled,

"A Writer of a Thousand Thrillers." It reviewed his career from the early age of fourteen and throughout his literary writing. It told of his beginning as an author, "selling his sea and adventure stories to the Sibley Nickle Library of Chicago for the magnificent sum of twenty-five dollars apiece."

"Soon after he became first editor of the once-famous "Brooklyn Blade", then in 1881, he sold his first long serial, "The Island Treasure" (this was before Stevenson published "Treasure Island"), to one of the Frank Tousey weeklies; and from then on, for nearly twenty years, he continued to write for the various publications of this firm—serials, short stories, novelettes—at the average rate of ten thousand words a day!"

Another paragraph that not only is exciting and as unbelievable as the things he wrote about. "To the writer who taps off a couple of thousand words on his typewriter and considers he has done a day's work, the mere mechanical labor of forming ten thousand words with a steel pen seems paralyzing. But Lu Senarens ingenuity was not confined to inventing devices for fictional heroes. He discovered that by placing a piece of heavy velvet under his wrist the friction of his hand moving across it would generate enough electricity to keep the muscles flexible and prevent writer's cramp."

I wish I could type you the complete story, but it is quite a lengthy one. I am trying to remember when it was published, and I believe it could have been in the spring of 1924. There is also a nice half-tone picture printed of Mr. Senarens taken sitting at his desk amid sheafs of writing material. A very pleasant looking man, I should judge about forty-five. Not very robust, has a mustache and wearing a smart, striped silk shirt that was so popular thirty years ago.

I sincerely hope that you will be able to locate a copy of this mag's issue with the life story of the man that we all owe so much for our many happy hours of enjoyment spent reading his grand stories in our

youth. Quoting Elizabeth Alden—"It is not a small claim to distinction that among the hundreds of stories that came from his pen there should not be one that is not clean and wholesome as well as amazingly ingenious and imaginative."

We all want to remember the passing of Uncle Billee Benners in April 1940. These were trying days for ye editor and a nurse named Mrs. Fred Bendig, back in 1939-40 in Philadelphia, Pa. Also many other members we'll also mourn, too. Chas Jonas, John Maroney, Charlie Austin, H. O. Rawson, George Barton, Gilbert Paten, James Madison, P. C. Maraske and a score of others.

Herman Pitcher is just recovering from a sprained wrist.

Harry B. McConnell wants a novel or story paper that has a picture on front cover of 13 men seated around a table in a cave. All are skeletons. Believed to be in a Young Men of America, Boys of New York, or a Pluck & Luck, who has it?

Frank M. Lupton died Oct. 6th, 1910 at 23-27 City Hall Place, New York City.

When Mrs. E. Burke Collins died in 1902, her body was cremated by Wm. J. Benners and a monument put over her in a corner lot down in North Carolina.

Billy bought the copyright to Algers "Alone in New York" for \$150 in 1902 for Gannett, Publishers of Comfort Mag.

Isaac Ottenheimer died in Baltimore, Md., Nov. 30th, 1953, at the ripe old age of 82. He and his late brother Moses Ottenheimer founded the I. & M. Ottenheimer book publishers and sellers in 1890 when they were 14 and 19 years of age. They published a series of joke books, Bandit Series on Jesse and Frank James, Tracy, Burrows, Daltons and Youngers and so on.

Harry M. McConnell is in his 86th year, and still going strong, and has been smelling printer's ink since he was 12 years old. That time, he printed an amateur paper, and what a paper it was. He was a carrier boy for a country weekly paper when he was

14. Then on May 25th, 1885, after graduation from high school he entered the newspaper office (The Republican) as a printer's devil, and became far enough advanced in the business in one year that when the foreman got drunk and was discharged, Harry was made foreman. He bought out the office in 1911 and turned it over to his son-in-law in 1938, and now still helps out some. He is going on 70 years connected with that office, and never lost a day from illness. Never tasted liquor or tobacco, and only took one real vacation—a summer in Europe.

As to his book, he has collected material all his life, such as old time pictures, local programs, pamphlets, old dime and nickel novels and story papers, all kinds of show bills, and much other printed matter of local nature. But his main collection has been books that in some way relate to Harrison County, Cadiz, Ohio, and he has over 200 such books.

The book Harry has been working on, is an account of his newspaper experiences, a story of the middle-western county seat town, and a boy growing to manhood in such a town. And it will deal with experiences of thousands of boys who learned the printing business and a composite picture of a country town pretty much since 1880. Harry says it's very interesting material.

G. D. Nichols and Max Saltzman sent in copies of the Los Angeles Times, Sunday, Feb. 8, 1953 "A Dime Novel Was Once a Nickel," by Ray Zeman, on page 5, part II. A fine article and 2 large pictures of Nick Carter Library #179, The Counterfeiters Gold Tooth and Beadles Dime Library #573, The Witch of Shasta. A fine article on the old timers all around.

Mrs. Ann S. Stephens, author of the first Beadles Dime Novels in 1860, wrote "Maleaska or the White Hunter" up in the Catskills, in New York state where she was born.

Miss M. E. Braddon died Feb. 4th, 1915, in London, age 78.

L. D. Webster is feeling much better than he did.

Kenneth Daggett says the flood waters went into the basements and cellars of homes, stores all the way up and down the old Kennebec River. Says he felt pretty mean for a while with stomach trouble, but is better now.

Benny Tighe says the old blood pressure is kicking up on him again, and L. C. Skinner is about the same.

Every body has their troubles, so I may as well add mine. My stomach is kicking up on me too. Guess we all get old—we all have our ailments to go through with.

A. W. Lawson, over in London reports his brother and sisters were caught in that hurricane and flood over there and had a hard time of it.

If it's old Youths Companions you want, write to Kenneth Daggett, or old Beadles Boys Library, write to George Flaum. They have them by the bushels.

L. Morgan received a copy of Medal Library #227 and says it's the first one he's seen in 40 years. L. Morgan, 3018 25th St. N. E., Washington 18, D. C., again heard from after 4 years, says he has not had the time to do much with his hobby for the past few years, but hopes to give more time to it in the future. He has a complete set of Tip Top Weekly, and a couple of thousand of the old time five centers, such as Secret Service, Buffalo Bill Stories, Rough Rider, etc. He does not sell, but will exchange.

H. Barr Patten used to love to read True Detective Fiction and his dad used to think he was wasting his time, when he should have been reading something more solid.

Al Jennings, the former outlaw and ex-desperado (as the newspapers paint him), celebrated his and his wife's golden wedding anniversary recently. He is 90 and his wife Maude is 73.

"LEON RAY LIVINGSTON" Wanderer — Author — Orator by Robert H. Smeltzer

How many brothers know him by the above name? Maybe some who recall A #1. A #1 traveled from coast to coast; riding many times on the rods; respected by all railroads, for he was honest, upright and set a good example of NOT to harm but to protect the property of all roads he rode upon. He chalked his outstanding A #1 on box-cars all over the country.

His card states, as above, Wanderer, Author, Orator.

I once had a set of A #1 novels, but not now. Brother Cummings is eager for them, and so am I, for A #1 preached the same philosophy as our beloved author, Gil Patten; "Live and Let Live."

A #1, gone but not forgotten by many of his old-time friends and readers of his interesting tales of the road.

WANTED

Old copies of Maine Sportsman Magazine printed in Bangor, Maine, by Herbert W. Rowe.

S. B. Condon
So. Penobscot, Maine

WILL PAY \$1.00 EACH for the following issues of YOUTHS COMPANION

March 30, 1871
Oct. 30, 1873, Dec. 11, & Dec. 25 1873
December 1929

Mrs. Mittie Hazard
6 Bliven St., Nichols, New York

WANTED

Will pay \$2.50 each for DeWitt's Ten Cent Romances Nos. 61 and 63.
\$1.50 for Campfire Library #24.

Albert Johannsen
Box 566 Winter Park, Florida

Hollow Tree Magazine
821 Vermont, Lawrence, Kansas, USA
General Hobby Magazine
\$1.50 per year — Sample copy 10¢

I have 50 Secret Service for sale that I will sell to the one making the best offer. These are not junk, but are like they came off the dealer's shelf. Numbers on request. Roy Morris, 901 Michigan, Orlando, Fla.

FRANK T. FRIES

FRANK READE LIBRARY, MIDGET, and BLOOD & THUNDER LIBRARY

Franke Reade Library Nos.

Magazines.

1. Frank Merriwell vs Fred Fearnot
2. Frank Reade Jr.'s 'Warrior', or Fighting Apaches in Arizona & Merriwell
3. Frank Reade & Merriwell.
4. The End of Frank Merriwell and Fred Fearnot.
5. Frank Reade, Jr.'s "Warrior".
6. Young Wild West, the Prince of the Saddle & F. Reade Jr.'s Warrior.
7. Frank Reade Jr. and Young Wild West.
8. Young Wild West and Frank Reade.
9. Frank Reade Jr. and Young Wild West.
10. Frank Reade III and his Steam Motorcycle and Frank Reade Jr.'s Warrior
11. Frank Reade III, Young Wild West and Frank Reade Jr.'s "Warrior"
12. Frank Reade III and Frank Reade Jr.'s "Warrior".
- Midget No. 13, Frank Reade Jr. "Warrior".
14. Young Wild West.
15. Young Wild West.
16. Young Wild West and The Truth About Nick Carter.
17. Young Frank Reade and his Steam Motorcycle in Mexico, or Helping the Rebels.
19. Young Wild West's Wedding, or Striking it Rich in the Hills, and Young Frank Reade.
20. Murdered by Bootleggers, or the Melvin Horst Mystery.
21. Young Frank Reade and Young Wild West.
22. Young Frank Reade.
23. Young Frank Reade, and Young Wild West.
24. Young Wild West.
25. Young Wild West, and Young Klondike.
26. Young Klondike, or Off for the Land of Gold.
27. Young Klondike.
29. Young Klondike's Legacy, or the Secret of the Skeleton.
30. Young Klondike's Legacy.
31. Fred Fearnot's School days—Latest News of the Nickel Novel Heroes.
32. Fred Fearnot, The Man in the Iron Mask, etc.
34. Fred Fearnot, Picture of Work and Win No. 1.
36. Fred Fearnot, The Greatest Man in the World.
38. Fred Fearnot and the Hazers, Who Killed Young Wild West.
39. Fred Fearnot's Revenge—Latest News of Nickel Novel Heroes.
- 35-37. Fred Fearnot—Odds and Ends, etc.
40. Fred Fearnot's Revenge.
41. Frank Reade and Jack Wright's Trip to the Sunken Continent
- What I Like About American Novels.
42. Frank Reade and Jack Wright, etc.
44. Frank Reade and Jack Wright.
45. Jim Cummins Number—Jesse James, etc.
46. Jim Cummins—Wanderer, Wrote Frank Reades.
47. Final Days of Jim Cummins
48. Final Days of Jim Cummins, When Work & Win Went Haywire.
49. Fred Fearnot's Desperate Chance, Letter to the Public on Novels.

Price 10¢ each.

Have Nos 41 to 52, 53 to 64, 65 to 76, 77 to 82 Bound, Price \$2.00 per volume.

Ralph F. Cummings

Fisherville, Mass.